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Ed. note: This is one of our monthly essays from legislators. We've asked them to use the space to speak to their constituents -- why they voted on a particular bill, issues they hope to address, services their office offers. Rep. S. Mike Quigley represents the 5th District which includes Franklin Park, River Grove, Elmwood Park, Northlake and Melrose Park.

The direction of the climate change legislation passed by the House earlier this summer is just as important as its expediency. There are still some who reject the idea of a global warming crisis, but more who acknowledge it though aren't willing to do enough to change our current path.

But we already know where that path leads: high gas prices, dirty air and water, and global warming. That path sends our dollars to the environmentally-irresponsible and bypasses the clean energy jobs that could help lift us out of this recession.

I'm determined to find a new path. That's why I voted for the American Clean Energy and Security Act. The bill offers a long-term investment in our economy and our health. Future savings will quickly outpace immediate costs, and incentives for green jobs will bring unemployed Americans back to work. The Act won't increase the federal deficit, will cost the typical American household less than a postage stamp per day, and will save lower income households as much as \$40 per year. Most importantly, it's a key step toward protecting our environment, not just for ourselves, but for our children and our children's children.

The Act, however, is only a first step. It would be short-sighted to be too pleased with our

progress and stop here. Rather, we are just at the beginning, and many challenges remain.

Overcoming our dependence on coal is only one of the challenges ahead, but the passage of the Act in the House gives me confidence that Americans are ready to choose a new and historic path towards a cleaner and more sustainable environment.

I'm also encouraged that the Act acknowledges the millions of Americans who are out of work. In fact, research shows that Illinois could see a net increase of 70,000 jobs and approximately \$6.6 billion in investment revenue. The job training assistance programs included in the bill will also aid in the adjustment process locally.

Climate change also demands a multilateral solution. We have to do our part, but must also demand that others in the global community do the same.

We've started already in Illinois' 5th District. Today, SolarWerks, a Lakeview joint venture, is working to expand our capture of solar energy. Northpoint Construction in Ravenswood is building sustainable green homes; and Serious Materials' north side factory, the site of a closed window plant, has reopened to make energy efficient windows.

Conserving energy and reducing pollution has taken on increased significance now that the EPA reports that Chicago isn't meeting the national standard for air pollution. This dire situation is threatening our public health and exacerbating, when not causing, disease.

Now is our opportunity to overcome apathy and do something about it. The cost of inaction is one we simply can't afford. The Act is a good start, but real change will demand a sustained effort by all of us. I'll be working hard to see it through, and encourage the Senate to consider this ACT amid other important issues this session.